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27 April 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: All Division and Branch Chiefs, ERA

SUBJECT : Systematic Branch Review and Updating of Reading Panel Requirements

1. PROBLEM

To establish a formal, systematic procedure for periodic review and updating of branch requirements.

2. ASSUMPTIONS

A. That the raw information received by the branches on a continuing basis is only as selective as the specific guidance set forth in the branch reading panel requirements.

B. That information requirements change both as knowledge cumulatively becomes more refined and exact and as the intelligence targets change.

3. FACTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The normal body of raw intelligence information flows into the Agency through OCD. In OCD it is routed to appropriate Offices such as ORR.

B. As this information arrives in ORR it immediately flows to the ORR reading panel (St/I/C) where, almost solely on the basis of specific standing branch requirements, it is routed to the interested branches.

C. The fundamental importance of maintaining suitable reading panel requirements is obvious to all persons who have analyzed the process briefly. However, in many instances, two basic problems have resulted in suboptimal functioning of this vital link: unintelligibility and obsolescence of standing branch requirements.

D. The unintelligibility arises in part from a failure to understand fully the communication problem involved in the presentation of reading panel requirements. All information requirements must be translated from the technical language and professional jargon of the specific branch into words, phrases, symbols, and ideas which can be recognized by a non-specialist on the reading panel.

E. The obsolescence of requirements probably arises because in some divisions there is no formal procedure for systematically reviewing and updating these requirements.

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F. There are two aspects of the obsolescence of requirements:

(1) Negligence in adding new requirements results in the failure to receive the desired raw information in the branches.

(2) Negligence in discontinuing outmoded requirements results in burdening the branch analysts and is costly in terms of man-hours.

G. The branches manifest varying degrees of responsibility on the filing and updating of reading panel requirements.

(1) At one extreme, some branches are up to the minute. For example, the I/EE basic requirement list, which in many respects is a model for clarity, balance, and usefulness, is dated 21 March 1955.

(2) At the other extreme, some branches have reading panel requirements dated as far back as 1951.

H. Similarly, the division staffs manifest varying degrees of responsibility for guidance on the filing and updating of reading panel requirements.

(1) At one extreme, the D/I staff has been very active and very helpful in keeping the requirements of its branches up to date.

(2) At the other extreme, one division has not revised its 1951 requirements.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

A. Some branches and divisions already have demonstrated proficiency and imagination in the formulation and revision of reading panel requirements.

B. The Economic Research Area can lend additional support to the channeling of raw information and, indirectly, to the quality of ERA reports by requiring all divisions to establish a formal system of reviewing and updating reading panel requirements.

C. The divisions should devise and administer a system for annual filing and quarterly review of reading panel requirements. Primary responsibility for branch requirements should rest with the branch chief who may delegate the actual maintenance as appropriate.

D. The proposed basic requirements or revisions should be presented informally to the reading panel chief to test intelligibility sometime prior to the formal transmittal through channels. About thirty copies of the requirements are needed.

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E. Routing service to the branches often can be improved by explanatory discussions and visits with reading panel members who should be recognized as important members of the intelligence team.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. That all standing branch reading panel requirements dated prior to 1 July 1954 be revised before 1 July 1955.

6. ACTION

A. That the attached draft memorandum, establishing a policy and procedure for administering branch reading panel requirements, be reviewed and comments returned to OCh/E by 4 May 1955.



Chief, Economic Research  
Research and Reports

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Attachments:

1. Policy draft
2. Dates of ORR Reading Panel Requirements by ERA branches.

OCh/E/RR/ELA/GWJ/mlc

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